

Love in a Hurry

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SYNOPSIS.

Hall Bonistelle, artist-photographer, prepares for the day's work in his studio. Flodie Fisher, his assistant, reminds him of a party he is to give in the studio that night. Mr. Doremus, attorney, calls and informs Hall that his Uncle John's will has left him \$4,000,000 on condition that he marry before his twenty-eighth birthday, which begins at midnight that night. Mrs. Rena Royaltan calls at the studio. Hall asks her to marry him. She agrees to give him an answer at the party that night. Miss Carolyn Dallys calls. Hall proposes to her. She agrees to give him an answer at the party. Rosamund Gale, art model, calls. Hall tries to rush her into an immediate marriage. She, too, defers her answer until the evening. Flodie tries to show Hall a certain way out of the mixup, but he is obtuse. Jonas Hassingbury, heir to the millions in case Hall fails to marry on time, plots with Flodie to block Hall's marriage to any of the three women before midnight. Flodie arranges to have the three meet at the studio as if by chance. At that meeting much feminine fencing ensues, in which Flodie uses her own foil adroitly. Hall comes in. Alfred, the janitor, brings in a newspaper with the story of the queer legacy. The ladies' alliance to humiliate Hall dissolves and they retire to plan war for the \$4,000,000 prize. Successive telephone messages from the three ladies inform Hall that he is accepted by all three. Desperate, he asks Flodie to save him from the three-horned dilemma by marrying him. She refuses, and goes with Alfred, who has long been a humble suitor, to get a marriage license. Jonas arrives for the party.

CHAPTER XI—Continued.

Hall's reception of him was polite without being over-cordial. The two cousins did not often meet; they had little in common, and they disliked each other thoroughly.

"Well, Jonas, been having a good time in New York?"

"Oh, well, so-so." His eyes twinkled. "Not so good as I expect to have a little later, though." He winked elaborately at Flodie.

"Oh, I see. Meaning that money, I presume."

"That's right! Can't blame me for takin' an interest in it, can ye? Four millions don't walk into my pocket every night, my boy!" He slapped Hall cordially on the shoulder.

Hall was angry. "You seem to be pretty sure of it!"

Jonas placidly shook his head in sorrow at this exhibition of temper. "Now, Hall, ye want to take this in a Christian spirit, my boy. I can see it'll be all for the best. Remember that gold is but dross—"

Hall whirled on him. "Shut up, will you? By jove, if you weren't in my own house, I'd kick you down-stairs!" And with that, he flung impetuously out of the room.

Jonas' sour glance followed him. "Fie, fie, ain't he? How be ye gettin' along?" he asked anxiously, in an undertone, of Flodie. "Anything happened?"

"Well, I should say!" said Flodie. "You ought to have seen the show. But we're not out of the woods, yet. Still, I think that if I have time and luck, I can put it through."

"Ye can? By whilkens, that's fine! Good for you! Well, we ought to know pretty soon now." He looked up at the clock. "Only, let's see—an hour and thirty—" He stopped, staring at the clock, then, with a puzzled face, drew his own big watch from his pocket, and compared it with the clock. "Say!" He turned eagerly to Flodie.

"Hush!" cried Flodie, and laid her finger on her lip.

Jonas' expression grew crafty. Then he grinned. "Oh, I see! Got a little scheme fixed up, eh?" He walked to the couch and sat down, beckoning

her. "Say, jest set down, won't ye, and let me know how things stand."

Flodie demurely took a seat beside him.

"Then they ain't no danger of any o' them three women gittin' him, is they?"

"Why," said Flodie, "not if we can manage to keep them away from him. It isn't so easy as it looks. Those women are getting desperate, now, and you've got to help me fool them."

"Me? How? What can I do?"

"Why, if one of them gets him, you've got to just jump in, and break it up in a hurry. Don't let her get a word in edgewise, if you can help it. Fall on the floor, smash a window—anything! It doesn't matter what they think."

"By jiminy, I'll do it, you bet!" cried Jonas. "One thing I do know: How to handle women!"

"There's millions in it, Mr. Hassingbury!"

"And I'm the feller what's goin' to get 'em!" He seized Flodie's hand before she could protest, and shook it energetically. "Say, miss, you're a little wonder! Think of your doin' all that just on my account—you're a friend worth havin', d'you know it?"

"It was nice of me, wasn't it?" Flodie replied modestly, turning away to bite her lip.

Jonas hitched his chair closer. "Why, I been a-thinkin' of it over to-day, and I got a proposition I've decided to make to ye. If I git this here money, and it looks now like I should, what d'ye say to we two hitchin' up together?"

Flodie jumped up suddenly. "Now, hold on, miss!" Jonas exclaimed, and stretched forth his long arm in expostulation. "You hear me out first. I've kind o' took a notion to ye, and I'm willin' to try it, if you be. I don't see where I could do better, and you'd git a good man if you got me, miss, if I do say it!"

"Thank you kindly," said Flodie, "but I don't really know what in the world I'd do with you if I got you."

Jonas stared at her as if she were raving. "You don't know what you're talkin' about! Don't you realize if you marry me you'll get four million dollars? Lord, any other gal would just jump at the chance to have the spendin' o' that money."

"Let 'em jump!" said Flodie. "That's my advice, Mr. Hassingbury; you take a good jumper. And I want to give you a tip—" She went up to him and took him confidentially by the lapel of his coat. "There will be three women here tonight, and all of 'em can jump like grasshoppers. Once they find out you have money, and they'll jump at the chance, you see! They'll jump all over you!"

Before the astonished Jonas could reply, Alfred opened the door to a lady gorgeously arrayed in blue. Flodie gave one look at her, then whispered: "There's the first one of 'em now! Miss Gale." Then she stepped forward, sniffing frangipani scornfully, and welcomed Rosamund.

An elaborate, painstaking picture of feminine frippery was Rosamund Gale. She came in as if making a stage entrance. Something was to happen tonight. Rosamund was on the war-path.

She barely acknowledged Flodie's greeting, or Jonas' presence, but cast a hasty anxious glance about; then, seeing no women, seemed to breathe freer. "Where's Hall?" she asked almost immediately.

"Oh, somewhere about. In with the musicians probably," Flodie turned to Jonas. "Mr. Hassingbury, Miss Gale!"

Jonas bent over her. "Why, now, they's a lot o' Gales down to Branford, where I live. I wonder if you—"

"Tell Hall to hurry please!" cried Rosamund to Flodie. Flodie started off, smiling, but Rosamund caught at her arm and held her. "Wait a minute, though! Miss Fisher, listen! Has anything—anything important happened?"

"What d'you mean?"

"Oh, I mean—well, nothing exciting, has it?"

Flodie reflected. "Why, I'm afraid Alfred has spilled some salad on his new dress suit, Miss Gale, if that's what you mean?"

Rosamund did not condescend to answer. She left haughtily and passed hurriedly into the dressing room and divested herself of her wraps. Jonas had but time to remark to Flodie, "So she's one of 'em, is she? Pretty gal, by jiminy!" when she was out again, and without noticing them, had gone to the door of the reception room, and looked in, scowling.

Here, the rugs were all up and the floor waxed for dancing. Three musicians were scraping and tuning their instruments. Hall Bonistelle was in a corner, arranging a vase of flowers. Rosamund darted in and swam up to him. No scowl now; she was a different creature, smiling, radiant, angelic, sailing on an air of gladness. She seized Hall's hand excitedly.

"Oh, Hall," she exclaimed dramatically, "ma's perfectly delighted! It's all right, and you needn't worry a moment longer! Aren't you glad?" She hung on him fondly as if she expected him to embrace her.

Hall had turned white. Rosamund's beauty had instantly disarmed him. He could no more have said the brutal things he had contemplated than he could have struck a child. Weakly, he procrastinated, fumbling her hand. "Really?" he managed to say. "Jove! That's fine!"

"Well, why don't you kiss me, Hall?" Rosamund's eyes were on the door, watching anxiously for interruptions. Flodie gazed in.

Hall looked over his shoulder, embarrassed. "Oh, these musicians—I

don't want them to—say, wait till we can be alone!"

She stared at him in annoyed surprise, then gave another irritated glance at the door. The sound of women's voices goaded her on. "Nonsense! Why, I intend to announce our engagement immediately."

Terror-stricken, Hall exclaimed, "Oh, no, that won't do at all, Rosamund, really. We'll have to wait a little while—not tonight, anyway!"

"Why, that's half the fun of being engaged—talking about it!" Then, after another quick look toward the office, she gazed up at him and pressed his hand. "We are engaged, aren't we, Hall?"

"Oh, yes—certainly! Only—"

Rosamund had an instant of triumph and relief. It was all right, then. She tossed her head as if in secret revolt; she would have her own way, see if she didn't! "Well," she said coldly, "I'll wait a while, if you insist. Only, I should think you might look happier about it. You act so funny!"

He was saved from having to reply by Jonas Hassingbury, who, glimpsing the encounter, and impelled by Flodie,

had plunged boldly forward to the rescue.

"Say," he began pointblank to Rosamund, "be you any relation to Abijah Gale? I believe his mother was a Nettleton."

Rosamund glared, and Hall, seizing the happy chance, had already begun to edge off, with a mumbled something about duties and guests. People had, in truth, begun to arrive and the place was filling rapidly. The musicians had begun to play; Flodie looked in, with a distressed face, and beckoned. Still Rosamund held him by the sleeve.

Jonas fired again. "Ain't never been down Branford way, have ye? Say, you ought to run down to our village some time, miss, and git a mess o' clams. We got some fust-class lobsters down home. Know it?"

Rosamund turned the full glory of her gaze upon him. "Oh, yes," she said sweetly, "I can easily believe that!"

But alas for her irony! This indulgence had cost her her prey. Hall was already across the room, and Jonas clung like a leech. She could not, with all her insolence, detach him.

CHAPTER XII.

Guests were coming in bunches, now, and kept Hall so busy for half an hour that he had no time to plan how he should escape from the other two women with whom he must inevitably have matrimonial converse. So far, he was not particularly anxious. Rosamund he thought he could dispose of somehow, putting her off till Flodie should change her mind; and from Carolyn Dallys and Mrs. Royaltan he feared little. He would trust, at any rate, to the inspiration of the moment. With four millions—and Flodie—he didn't much care what they thought of him. It was a caddish trick, perhaps, but—four millions! The end would have to justify the means.

So, handsome and elegant and popular, witty and well-bred, he laughed and gossiped with his guests, started the dancing, introduced one to another, showed his color prints, and between times, watched the mousy girl in white who had so suddenly assumed an extraordinary importance in his life.

Flodie, merely bowed to and patronized by most of the guests, had discovered an unexpected friend in Mr. Doremus. He, finding her his only acquaintance, had stuck to her like a burr. Flodie liked him. At a one-step he could not cut much of a figure, but seated in the office with Flodie, where she could keep an eye on Alfred and the caterer, it was not long before she felt impelled to make him her ally. With all his elephantine wit and his manners of the old school, Mr. Doremus treated her in a jocose, fatherly, indulgent way that inspired her trust. And, that evening, Flodie had dire need of a coadjutor. She began to give him her confidence, bit by bit, watching his face more than listening to his replies, and decided that she could trust him; he had sympathy and tact. When, at last, after many interruptions, her story was told, Mr. Doremus took off his misty glasses and wiped them.

"Miss Fisher," he said soberly, "if I can help in this crisis, let me implore you to tell me how."

Flodie got up slowly, and looked into his kind blue eyes. "Would you mind coming into the studio for a few minutes?" she asked. "I'm so afraid we may be interrupted or overheard. I want to tell you something."

Mr. Doremus offered her his arm, and escorted her into the studio.

By eleven o'clock both Carolyn Dallys and Mrs. Royaltan had come. They had, in fact, arrived together, having shared Mrs. Royaltan's limousine. This preconcerted action was caused less by friendship than a mutual suspicion. The two ladies dared not trust each other out of sight, and each for fear the other might gain an advantage, sacrificed her own desire to be beforehand with her plans.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



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LECTURING ADAM AND EVE

Somewhat Humorous Painting In German Church, Work of Artist of the Middle Ages.

In the Church of Saint Sebaldus at Nuremberg there is a delightful mural painting which makes one merry even to recall it. The subject is the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve are being lectured by an elderly man in flowing robes with a long white beard. His beard alone would more than supply Adam and Eve with the covering they lack.

In as easy attitude, with neither haste nor anxiety, he is pointing out to them the error of their ways. He is as detached in manner as though he were a professor lecturing at Leipzig on the fourth dimension of space.

Adam is somewhat dejected and reclines upon the ground. Eve, unabashed, with nothing on but the apple she is munching, is evidently in a reckless mood. She looks like a child of fifteen, with her hair down her back; the defiance of her attitude is that of a naughty little girl.

The world-old problem is under discussion, but with an air of good humor and cheerfulness on the part of the lecturer, as though there were still time in the world, as though hurry were an undiscovered human attribute, as though possibly the world would still go on even if the problem were left unsolved, and this first leafy parliament adjourned sine die.—New York Telegraph.

The Venerable Microbe.

Just to think the microbe has been in this terrestrial sphere twenty millions of years! Disease germs that now afflict humanity have been discovered in the fossils of the earliest life on earth. There was a belief that bacteria were a modern pest, and they came just in time to plague mankind. But why should they exist before? What was the object of their insignificant lives? This question science answers by saying that they first came to assist in the decomposition of the calcareous rocks. This certainly was a more honorable mission than to scare people in later days into the use of special drinking cups and to

set up great government bulwarks to resist their imaginary fury. The microbe was formerly an honorable and useful citizen, but now he has fallen from his high estate.

Guest Thought He Had 'Em.

James F. McGee, former cashier of the Crestwood bank of Louisville, Ky., got the scare of his life and suffered a shock which necessitated calling a physician when he found a six-foot "Georgia bull" snake crawling about his room in a local hotel.

Thinking a friend was playing a joke on him, McGee grabbed the snake, when the reptile began to show fight and put up a hard battle. Clerks and attaches of the hotel came to his rescue.

A clerk at the hotel said the snake belonged to a vaudeville performer whose room was directly above that of McGee's.

Bait.

The attention of the taxi driver was called to a purse lying on the floor of his car. He carefully looked around and then remarked confiden-

tially: "Well, sir, when business is bad I sometimes put it there and leave my door open. The purse is empty, of course, but you have no idea what a number of people jump in for a short drive. I've had five within the last hour, sir."

Distilleries on Old Farms.

On all the old farms in the United States there was a little distillery, though on some farms it was not so little, just as there was an icehouse and a smokehouse, where the peaches and apples and grapes could be distilled into fruit brandy.

Not Generally Understood.

There is nothing impossible about a white blackbird or a brown black-bear. In this connection "black" means a variety, not a color. The Yellow sea is not yellow, and the White mountains are not white.

And He Did.

"Save me!" murmured the fair damsel, as she fell into the arms of her ardent admirer. Being an economical man, he did so.